

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE: STATE SUMMARY

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Surveillance

Marriage and divorce certificates serve as legal documentation of marital status, and provide limited surveillance information useful in describing current and changing societal attitudes that impact individual and family relationships. Successful marriages often result in emotional and economic supports helpful in achieving adequate levels of health and living standards for family members. Divorce is associated with the loss of psychological and economic supports, and with an increase in the risk of poor health and economic disadvantage for family members. Changes in marriage and divorce rates and demographics, such as the average age at marriage, can indicate population shifts in family size and family economic stability.

Source of Data: Certificate of Marriage

Information on marriages presented in this report is obtained from data recorded on the *Certificate of Marriage* completed for marriages that occurred in Louisiana in the 1996 calendar year.

Louisiana law requires that marriage certificates be submitted by the parish clerks of court to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the marriage. The law also requires that the social security numbers of the bride and groom remain confidential.

It is estimated that certificates for at least 95% of marriages occurring annually in Louisiana are filed with Vital Records.

Source of Data: Certificate of Divorce or Annulment

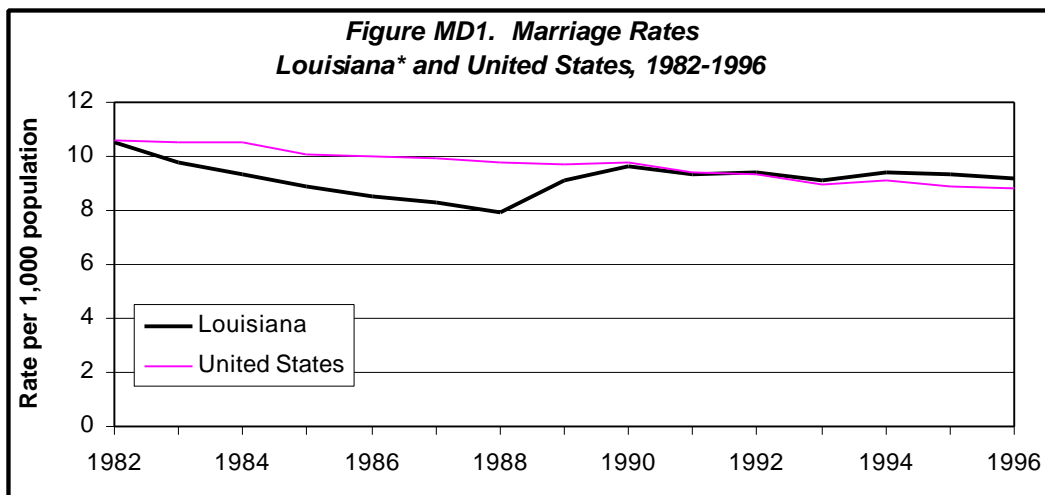
Divorce information presented in this report is obtained from the *Certificate of Divorce or Annulment* and from summary divorce counts submitted by parish clerks of court for divorces that occurred in Louisiana in the 1996 calendar year. Louisiana law requires that divorce certificates be submitted to the Vital Records Registry prior to the tenth of the month following the divorce, and that the identities of the registrants remain confidential.

Unfortunately, many Louisiana parishes do not submit divorce certificates to the central registry, and incomplete information is submitted by many parishes that do file certificates. The divorce tabulations included in this report reflect summary divorce counts made by the clerks of court, as well as data derived from actual certificates received in the central office. Because of poor reporting, Louisiana is excluded from the national divorce registration system.

MARRIAGE

Counts and Rates

- In 1996, a total of 40,221 marriages occurred in Louisiana, a decrease of 295 marriages from the 1995 total of 40,516 (Table MD1).
- Using data reported by the parish in which the marriage occurred, **Louisiana's 1996 marriage rate was 9.2 marriages per 1,000 population.** This was a decrease of 0.1% from the 1995 rate of 9.3 per 1,000 population (Table MD1).
- After dropping to a low of 7.9 per 1,000 population in 1988, **Louisiana's marriage rates throughout the 1990s have been stable and have remained above 9.0 per 1,000 population** (Figure MD1, Table MD1).
- National and state marriage rates were approximately equal in the early 1980s, but a steep decline in state rates during the 1980s caused them to fall below national rates as the decade progressed. **In the 1990s, however, state rates have risen to a level slightly higher than national rates** (Figure MD1, Table MD1).



*Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for all parishes

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

The **marriage rate** measures marriages occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of marriages occurring in a geographic area during one year by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of marriages per 1,000 population. Marriage rates would be more representative of Louisiana resident marriages if they were calculated using the number of marriages to *residents* of an area, rather than the number of marriages *occurring* in an area. Marriage counts by residence of bride and groom are difficult to quantify, however, because couples often choose to marry outside of their residence area.

Table MD1. Marriage Counts and Rates Louisiana and United States, 1982-1996			
Year	Louisiana		United States
	Number	Rate**	Rate*
1982	45485	10.5	10.6
1983	43107	9.8	10.5
1984	41088	9.3	10.5
1985	39357	8.9	10.1
1986	37459	8.5	10.0
1987	36185	8.3	9.9
1988	33974	7.9	9.8
1989	38574	9.1	9.7
1990	40443	9.6	9.8
1991	39161	9.3	9.4
1992	40053	9.4	9.3
1993	39364	9.1	9.0
1994	40405	9.4	9.1
1995	40516	9.3	8.9
1996	40221	9.2	8.8

*Rate per 1,000 population

*Louisiana rates are based on parish of occurrence for 64 parishes

Source: Louisiana State Center for Health Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

Age of Bride and Groom

- In 1996 the largest proportion of Louisiana brides (26.6%) fell into the 20-24 year age group, while the largest proportions of grooms were evenly distributed between the 20-24 and 25-29 year age groups (23.2% in each age group) (Table MD2).

Table MD2. Marriage Counts by Age of Groom and Age of Bride Louisiana, 1996															
Age of Groom	Total	Age of Bride													
		Under 15	15-17	18-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70+ Unk.
Total	40221	5	846	3516	10698	8607	5372	3927	2676	1691	780	378	275	195	178 1077
LT-15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15-17	142	-	72	52	14	3	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18-19	1659	2	324	855	385	69	9	3	1	1	-	-	-	-	10
20-24	9313	3	375	2031	5286	1212	263	77	23	6	-	1	-	-	36
25-29	9388	-	51	434	3646	3775	983	317	108	30	5	3	1	-	35
30-34	6223	-	13	93	934	2199	1846	738	274	76	14	7	-	-	29
35-39	4313	-	2	26	290	842	1232	1173	512	173	39	5	1	-	18
40-44	3019	-	1	8	75	295	614	846	768	296	82	16	5	-	13
45-49	2053	-	2	2	33	115	263	456	531	456	138	36	9	5	6
50-54	1214	-	-	1	10	37	96	176	260	359	193	54	19	4	4
55-59	704	-	-	-	1	15	29	75	127	167	147	91	32	10	1
60-64	419	-	-	1	1	7	10	39	39	67	80	79	64	19	1
65-69	313	-	-	1	1	3	5	8	14	30	47	51	72	58	1
70+	417	-	-	-	1	3	3	3	15	23	31	35	72	99	-
Unk.	1044	-	6	12	21	32	19	15	4	7	4	-	-	-	923

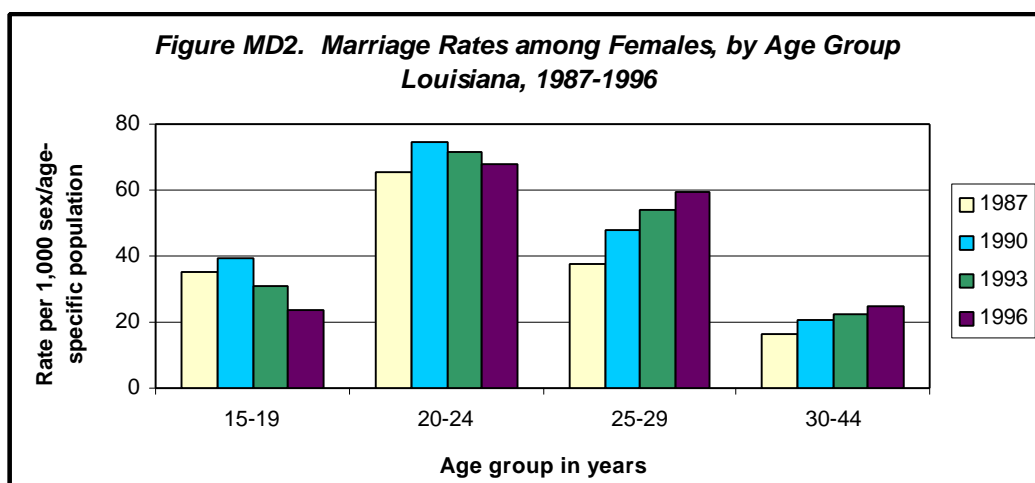
- The average age of Louisiana brides in 1996 was 29.6 years; the average for grooms was 32.0 years. Throughout the 1990s, there has been a steady increase in the ages of men and women who marry in Louisiana (Table MD3).

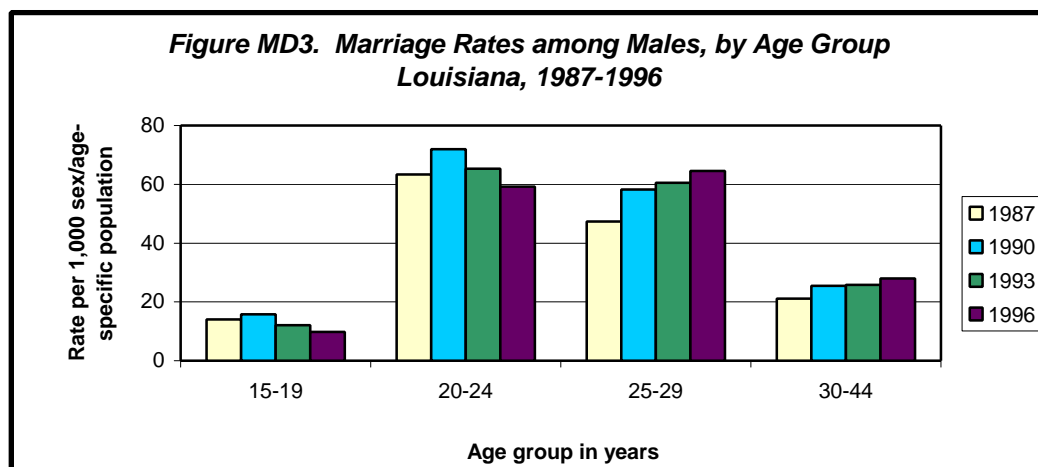
Table MD3. Average and Median Ages of Brides and Grooms Louisiana, 1996				
Year of Marriage	Average Age in Years		Median Age in Years	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
1992	28.6	31.0	25.3	27.5
1993	28.7	31.0	25.4	27.6
1994	29.0	31.0	25.6	27.8
1995	29.4	32.0	26.1	28.2
1996	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4

- During the 1990s, there has been a decrease in the rate of marriage in younger age groups, and an increase in rates seen in older age groups. Following a rise in the early 1990s, **marriage rates have declined during the 1990s in men and women below age 24. This same time period has seen a steady increase in marriage rates in both genders for men and women over age 24** (Table MD4, Figures MD2 and MD3).

Table MD4. Marriage Rates* by Gender and Age Louisiana, 1987-1996								
Year	15-19		20-24		25-29		30-44	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1987	35.4	14.0	65.2	63.3	37.6	47.3	16.4	21.1
1990	39.6	15.8	74.7	71.9	47.8	58.2	20.6	25.5
1993	30.7	12.1	71.7	65.3	53.8	60.5	22.5	25.8
1996	23.8	9.8	68.0	59.2	59.1	64.5	24.7	28.0

*Rate per 1,000 sex/age-specific population





Prior Marital Status

- In Louisiana in 1996, **48.4% of all marriages were first marriages for both the bride and the groom**; 60.0% of all brides and 60.5% of all grooms entered into first marriages (Table MD5).
- In **22.2% of Louisiana's 1996 marriages, both the bride and the groom were previously divorced**; 34.9% of all brides and 34.9% of all grooms were previously divorced (Table MD5).

**Table MD5. Marriage Counts by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom
Louisiana, 1996**

Previous Marital Status of Groom	Previous Marital Status of Bride					
	Total	Never Married	Widowed	Divorced	Marriage Annulled	Unknown
All	40221	24129	1192	14053	37	810
Never Married	24353	19467	190	4557	15	124
Widowed	1066	136	399	523	2	6
Divorced	14055	4445	597	8937	14	62
Marriage Annulled	39	18	1	14	6	-
Unknown	708	63	5	22	-	618

- The past 10 years have seen a 6.4% percent decline in the number of marriages in which both the bride and the groom were never married, and a 23.3% increase in the percent of marriages in which both the bride and groom were previously divorced (Table MD6).

Table MD6. Percents of Marriages by Previous Marital Status of Bride and Groom Louisiana, 1987-1996						
Year	Never Married			Divorced		
	Bride	Groom	Both	Bride	Groom	Both
1987	62.7	63.0	51.7	29.7	30.1	18.0
1990	63.2	63.3	52.0	31.8	32.3	19.9
1993	60.7	61.2	49.3	34.3	34.6	21.8
1996	60.0	60.5	48.4	34.9	34.9	22.2

- 1996 median ages in marriages of previously divorced brides and grooms were approximately 15 years higher than those in marriages between never-married brides and grooms (Table MD7).

Table MD7. Average and Median Age of Bride and Groom at this Marriage, by Previous Marital Status Louisiana, 1996				
Previous Marital Status	Average Age		Median Age	
	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom
All	29.6	32.0	26.3	28.4
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Unmarried	23.8	25.6	22.3	24.1
Bride Previously Unmarried, Groom Previously Married	28.9	35.1	26.9	32.9
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Unmarried	32.1	30.8	30.4	28.9
Bride Previously Married, Groom Previously Married	39.4	42.8	37.4	40.5

Race of Bride and Groom

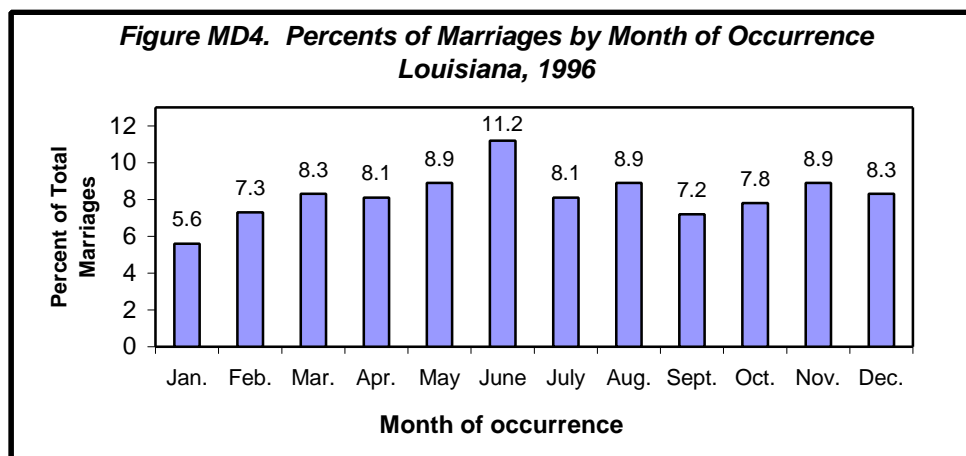
- In 97.2% of 1996 Louisiana marriages, both the bride and groom were of the same race. In 70.2% of marriages, both were white. In 26.2% of marriages, both were African-American. In 0.8% of marriages, both were of another race (Table MD8, MD9).
- 2.6% of marriages were mixed race, with 1.4% of total marriages being between whites and African-Americans (Tables MD8, MD9).

Table MD8. Marriage Counts by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1996					
Race of Groom	Race of Bride				
	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown
All Races	40221	28833	10757	567	64
White	28698	28246	197	225	30
Black	10959	381	10534	29	15
Other	511	182	16	313	-
Unknown	53	24	10	-	19

Table MD9. Percents of Total Marriages by Race of Groom and Race of Bride Louisiana, 1996					
Race of Groom	Race of Bride				
	All Races	White	Black	Other	Unknown
All Races	100.00	71.69	26.74	1.41	0.16
White	71.35	70.23	0.49	0.56	0.07
Black	27.25	0.95	26.19	0.07	0.04
Other	1.27	0.45	0.04	0.78	-
Unknown	0.13	0.06	0.02	-	0.05

Month of Marriage

- On average, 3,300 marriages occurred each month in Louisiana in 1996. In January, the number was lower (2,247 marriages); in June, the traditional month for marriages to occur, it was higher (4,519, or 11.2% of all 1996 marriages) (Figure MD4, Table MD10).



<i>Table MD10. Counts and Percents of Marriages by Month of Occurrence Louisiana, 1996</i>			
<i>Month</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Daily Average</i>
Total	40221	100.0	110
January	2247	5.6	72
February	2954	7.3	102
March	3346	8.3	108
April	3277	8.1	109
May	3583	8.9	116
June	4519	11.2	151
July	3277	8.1	106
August	3583	8.9	116
September	2876	7.2	96
October	3124	7.8	101
November	3585	8.9	120
December	3347	8.3	108
Unknown	503	-	-

DIVORCE

Counts

- Divorce reports are submitted by approximately 75% of the 64 parishes in Louisiana each year. In 1996, **47 parishes submitted reports of divorces to the state**. Many of the certificates that were submitted contained incomplete information.
- **There were a total of 14,737 reported divorces in the 47 parishes that submitted divorce reports. No counts were available for 17 of Louisiana's 64 parishes** (Parish Tables: Table MDP1).

The **divorce rate** measures divorces occurring in a population during a given period of time. It is calculated by dividing the number of divorces occurring in a geographic area by the total population of the area, then multiplying the quotient by 1,000. The rate is expressed as the number of divorces per 1,000 population. Because of underreporting of divorces by many parishes in Louisiana, it is not possible to calculate state-level divorce rates using data submitted by all 64 parishes.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE: PARISH TABLES

TABLE MDP1. MARRIAGES, FINAL DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS GRANTED LOUISIANA, 1996				
PARISH	MARRIAGES		DIVORCES BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE	ANNULMENTS BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE
	BY PARISH OF ISSUE OF LICENSE	BY PARISH OF OCCURRENCE		
STATE	40221	40221	14737	9
ACADIA	480	493	252	-
ALLEN	250	272	*	*
ASCENSION	709	675	316	-
ASSUMPTION	157	160	65	-
AVOUELLES	353	386	*	*
BEAUREGARD	339	313	193	-
BIENVILLE	99	134	74	-
BOSSIER	833	1074	512	-
CADDO	2420	2068	1313	-
CALCASIEU	2218	2073	1213	-
CALDWELL	106	104	54	-
CAMERON	73	95	39	-
CATAHOULA	103	115	54	1
CLAIBORNE	101	108	60	-
CONCORDIA	221	206	83	-
DESOTO	189	214	*	*
E BATON ROUGE	3682	3372	2053	2
EAST CARROLL	37	48	12	-
E FELICIANA	143	195	56	-
EVANGELINE	300	342	96	-
FRANKLIN	207	209	111	-
GRANT	130	187	1	-
IBERIA	593	601	*	*
IBERVILLE	98	180	*	*
JACKSON	152	153	4	-
JEFFERSON	4091	3661	2341	2
JEFF DAVIS	282	313	107	-
LAFAYETTE	1683	1567	*	*
LAFOURCHE	770	719	387	1
LASALLE	146	152	57	-
LINCOLN	346	305	159	-
LIVINGSTON	777	881	1	-
MADISON	161	130	*	*
MOREHOUSE	191	190	*	*
NATCHITOCHES	356	370	190	-
ORLEANS	4957	5438	786	-
OUACHITA	1257	1238	895	-
PLAQUEMINES	134	192	108	-
POINTE COUPEE	155	163	80	-
RAPIDES	1192	1166	693	1
RED RIVER	99	84	*	*
SABINE	219	239	112	-

TABLE MDP1. MARRIAGES, FINAL DIVORCES AND ANNULMENTS GRANTED LOUISIANA, 1996				
PARISH	MARRIAGES		DIVORCES BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE	ANNULMENTS BY PARISH GRANTING DECREE
	BY PARISH OF ISSUE OF LICENSE	BY PARISH OF OCCURRENCE		
ST BERNARD	695	657	346	-
ST CHARLES	365	343	194	-
ST HELENA	60	55	12	-
ST JAMES	155	212	24	-
ST JOHN	273	302	6	-
ST LANDRY	766	794	283	-
ST MARTIN	283	305	72	-
ST MARY	499	517	1	-
ST TAMMANY	1733	1706	*	*
TANGIPAHOA	904	908	329	2
TENSAS	33	49	*	*
TERREBONNE	892	923	527	-
UNION	151	179	51	-
VERMILION	398	430	184	-
VERNON	677	705	*	*
WASHINGTON	408	421	*	*
WEBSTER	378	326	138	-
W BATON ROUGE	242	201	*	*
WEST CARROLL	73	78	*	*
W FELICIANA	86	152	*	*
WINN	161	169	93	-
OUT OF STATE	-	22	*	*

*NO DIVORCE OR ANNULMENT DATA REPORTED BY CLERK OF COURT

MDP2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS MARRIED, BY RESIDENCE OF BRIDE AND GROOM LOUISIANA, 1996				
PARISH	PARISH OF RESIDENCE			
	GROOM ONLY	BRIDE AND GROOM	BRIDE ONLY	TOTAL
STATE	4515	63348	5292	73155
ACADIA	67	812	74	953
ALLEN	51	374	39	464
ASCENSION	118	1056	96	1270
ASSUMPTION	27	274	36	337
AVOUELLES	33	576	52	661
BEAUREGARD	54	560	72	686
BIENVILLE	34	200	29	263
BOSSIER	158	1274	177	1609
CADDO	205	3538	274	4017
CALCASIEU	122	3198	190	3510
CALDWELL	22	154	25	201
CAMERON	16	162	12	190
CATAHOULA	15	190	24	229
CLAIBORNE	12	148	23	183
CONCORDIA	20	254	44	318
DESOTO	42	314	40	396
E BATON ROUGE	333	5890	408	6631
EAST CARROLL	13	52	8	73
E FELICIANA	33	200	34	267
EVANGELINE	44	508	49	601
FRANKLIN	24	314	32	370
GRANT	46	274	49	369
IBERIA	74	1002	82	1158
IBERVILLE	47	198	34	279
JACKSON	29	232	31	292
JEFFERSON	404	7072	561	8037
JEFF DAVIS	36	446	45	527
LAFAYETTE	179	2812	181	3172
LAFOURCHE	68	1228	65	1361
LASALLE	27	240	16	283
LINCOLN	55	484	67	606
LIVINGSTON	91	1672	183	1946
MADISON	13	166	18	197
MOREHOUSE	31	280	32	343
NATCHITOCHES	58	568	46	672
ORLEANS	387	6566	434	7387
OUACHITA	122	2162	210	2494
PLAQUEMINES	36	310	27	373
POINTE COUPEE	33	238	39	310
RAPIDES	122	1886	149	2157
RED RIVER	13	106	16	135
RICHLAND	45	248	38	331
SABINE	20	402	29	451
ST BERNARD	69	1072	86	1227
ST CHARLES	75	556	76	707

MDP2. NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS MARRIED, BY RESIDENCE OF BRIDE AND GROOM LOUISIANA, 1996				
PARISH	PARISH OF RESIDENCE			
	GROOM ONLY	BRIDE AND GROOM	BRIDE ONLY	TOTAL
ST HELENA	13	72	10	95
ST JAMES	35	230	33	298
ST JOHN	57	524	63	644
ST LANDRY	98	1158	102	1358
ST MARTIN	51	514	47	612
ST MARY	35	834	53	922
ST TAMMANY	137	2302	193	2632
TANGIPAHOA	82	1706	57	1845
TENSAS	16	48	13	77
TERREBONNE	50	1708	75	1833
UNION	38	236	37	311
VERMILION	42	684	64	790
VERNON	139	1050	62	1251
WASHINGTON	42	732	54	828
WEBSTER	45	578	49	672
W BATON ROUGE	48	262	52	362
WEST CARROLL	7	106	19	132
W FELICIANA	26	100	26	152
WINN	31	236	30	297
UNKNOWN STATE*	-	-	1	1
OUT OF STATE**	1226	5612	449	7287

* UNKNOWN PARISH AND STATE OF RESIDENCE ASSUMED LOUISIANA RESIDENTS

**OUT OF STATE RESIDENTS NOT INCLUDED IN STATE TOTAL